

WHO G/76

April 18, 1976

Dr. Martin Kaplan
World Health Organization
1211 Geneva 27
SWITZERLAND

Dear Martin,

I am dictating this just after Hamao Umezawa left my office during a brief visit.

We had a very interesting discussion about the present status of concern about safety precautions for recombinant DNA in Japan as compared to the rest of the world. He had been feeling fairly complacent about it and was rather surprised when I told him the drift of developments in this country which I think are taking a very nasty turn at the present time. Of course, the word antibiotics in Japan conjures images of the most important technological contribution that that country has made in the past 20 years, whereas here all the people seem to be able to think about is the over-consumption of antibiotics in the use and feed and the importance of having developed them in the first place is pretty much taken for granted.

At any rate, he indicated his willingness to contribute to our own discussions of the matter in June and at minimum, I will be writing him shortly to request that he submit some written material that could be incorporated into our subcommittee's deliberations. This will include not only his own views but also whatever formal recommendations have been reached by the appropriate scientific groups within his country.

This then led me to two further thoughts and questions:

- 1) has your office been able to collect similar materials with respect to the regulatory situation in other countries or are you going to rely entirely on the subcommittee members, and
- 2) is there some way to bring Umezawa more directly into these discussions, and perhaps into the work of ACMR more generally. I should not have to elaborate on the stature that Umezawa holds in the applications of basic science to the most important applications, and the fact that he is very much a scientific hero in Japan itself. If we were to continue to emphasize science at WHO, he would certainly be a very credible candidate for ACMR itself. I do not have the current membership of ACMR handy right now and

of Umezawa

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have only a vague impression as to what the Japanese contribution has been to the committee.

An alternative, which is probably not too reasonable but deserves some thought, is whether it would be feasible to invite Umezawa to be a member of the pre-ACMR subcommittee meeting.

Sincerely yours,

Joshua Lederberg
Professor of Genetics

JL/rr

cc: G.J.V. Nossal